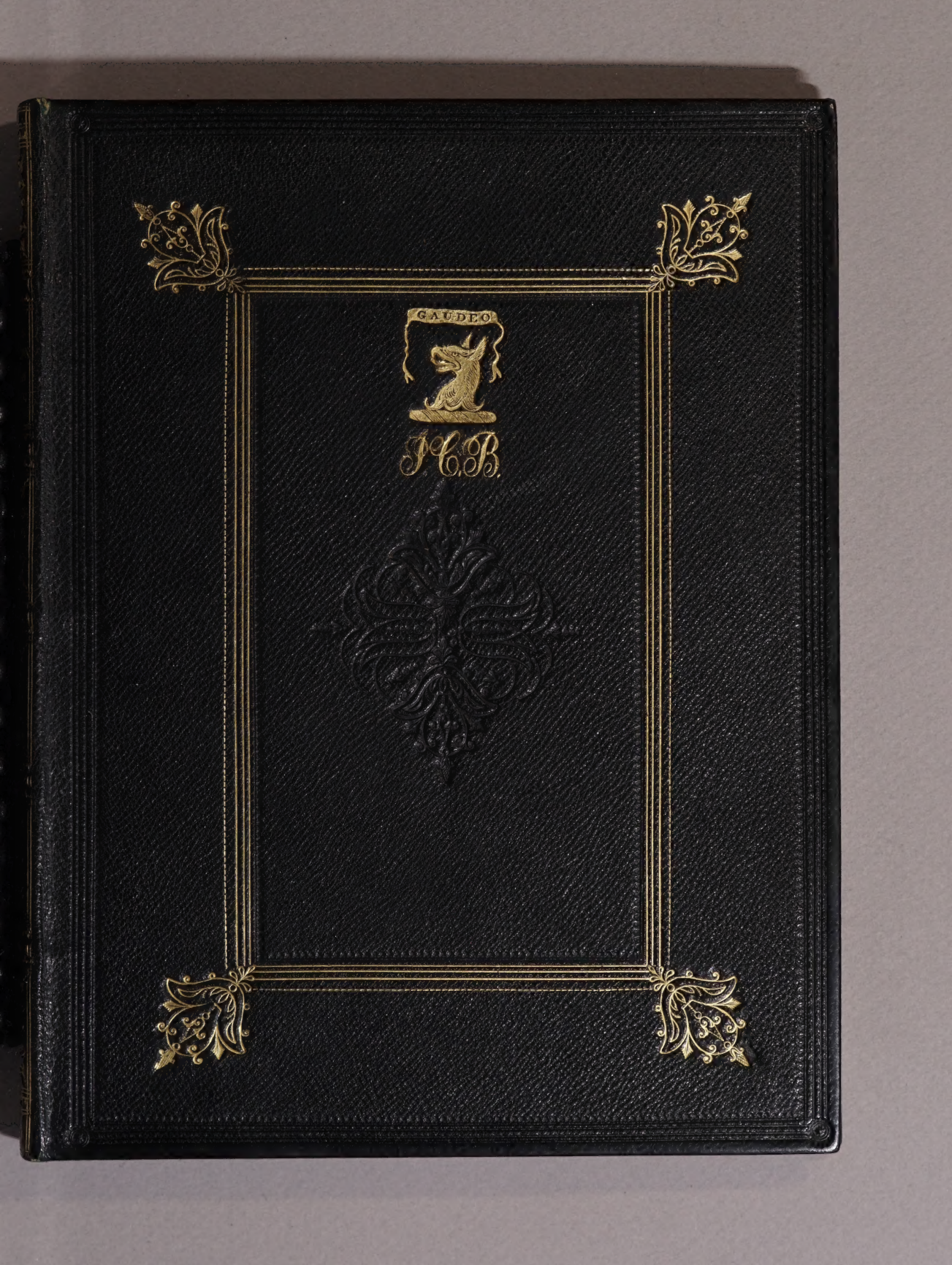
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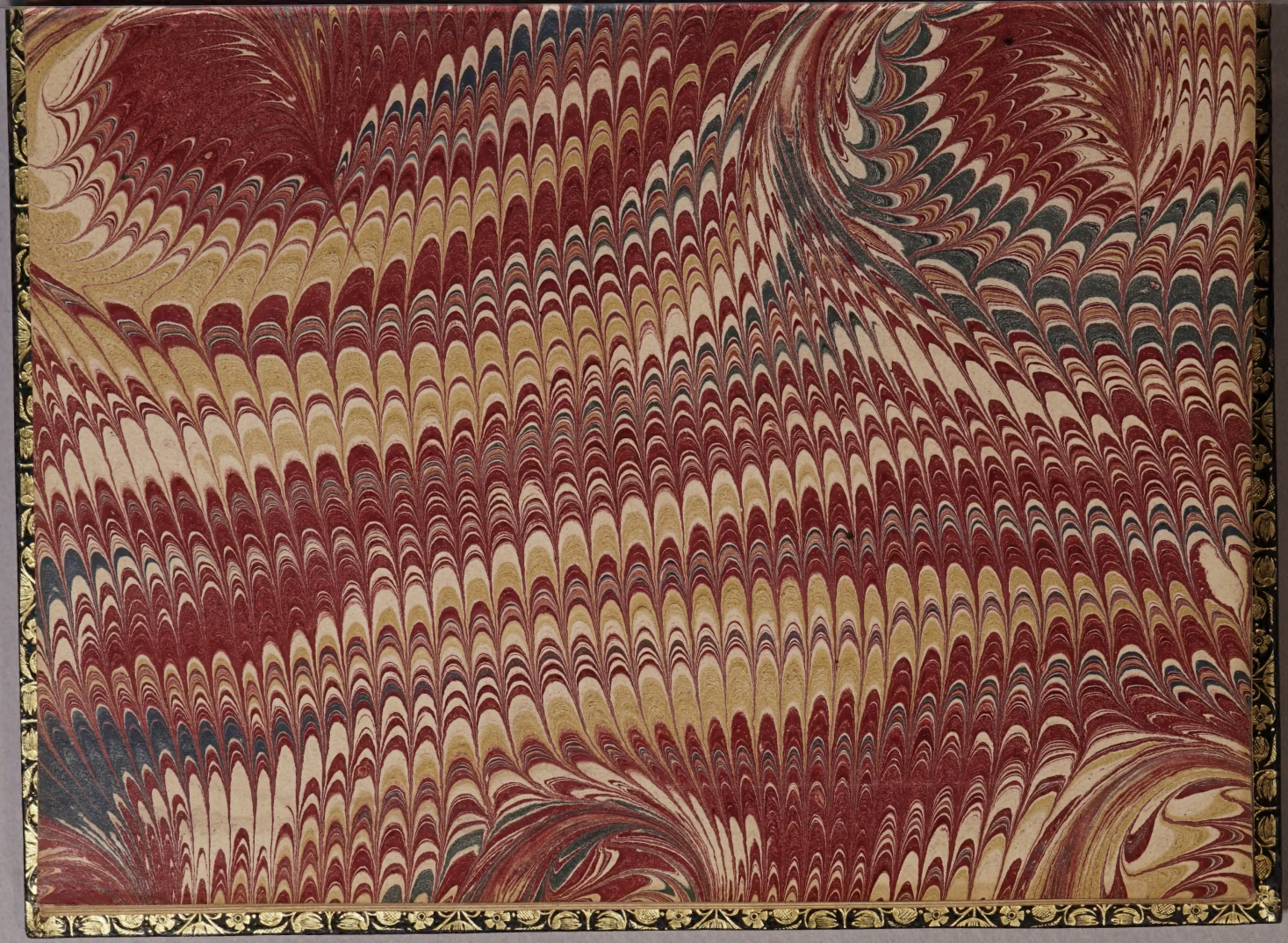

BOUND BY C. MURTON

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The Christian

COMMONVVEALTH:

OR,

The Civil Policy

Of

The Rising Kingdom of Jesus Christ.

Written

Before the Interruption of the Government, by Mr. *John Eliot*, Teacher of the Church of Christ at *Roxbury* in *New-England*.

And

Now Published (after his consent given) by a Server of the Season.

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RPJCB

JOHN CARTER BROWN

To the Choſen, and Holy, and Faithful, who manage the Wars of the Lord, againſt Antichriſt, in great *Britain*; and to all the Saints, faithful Brethren, and Chriſtian people, of the Commonwealth of *England*: Grace and Mercy, with Peace and Truth be multiplied, through Jeſus Chriſt our Soveraign Lord and King.

Ever Honoured, and Beloved in Chriſt,

THe late great Changes, which have fallen out in great Britain and Ireland, have ſo amazed the moſt of men; and the black, and confuſed Clouds, which have over-ſpread the whole Land, have ſo darkened the way of thoſe wheels of Providence by which Chriſt is coming to ſet up his Kingdom, that they whoſe eyes the Lord hath begun to open, to ſee Chriſt coming, in power and in great glory, ac-

cording to his Promiſe, do alſo ſee the other part of his Word verified, namely, that the coming of Chriſt is in the Clouds of darkneſs; by means whereof it is long ere all men can ſee him, or be perſwaded that it is he, who is now coming; though afterwards, they ſhall ſee that even thoſe Clouds were needful, a while to obſcure the bright appearance of his deſign.

Lately reading a Book called a Plea for Non-ſubſcribers, *or the grounds and reaſons of many Miniſters of* Cheſhire *and* Lancaſhire, &c. *though I had before heard of the ſad differences, diſtances of ſpirit, and diſſatisfactions among the people of the Lord: yet then my heart bled to ſee ſuch precious holy men, pleading (as they believe) for God, with a pure and ſincere Conſcience, and yet in ſo doing ſtrongly to ſpeak againſt the glorious work of the Lord Jeſus, in caſting down Antichriſt, and ſetting up his own Kingdom foretold in Scripture, and now fulfilling, as alſo ſtrongly and ſharply ſpeaking againſt thoſe whom the Lord hath pleaſed to employ, and improve as his Inſtruments in accompliſhing thereof.*

On the other ſide, thoſe writings which that Book Anſwereth, have ſo miſſed the Principles on which the Cauſe ſtandeth, whereby the Conſciences of others ſhould be ſatisfied, who oppoſe; as that the Anſwerers have clearly the upper ground of them in many things: and therefore ſtand firme in that which they ſuppoſe to be a right Cauſe, and weaken thoſe who have indeed a right Cauſe in hand, inſomuch as that hereby the difference is exceedingly encreaſed and ſharpened.

Now though I am the moſt unmeet of all men, to undertake to interpoſe and ſpeak unto ſuch learned, grave, holy,

holy, and eminent persons, every way beyond me in all accomplishments for the Lords work, and in a Cause so much above me; yet was I pressed in my spirit, considering whose Cause I plead, to take the boldness to propound that unto them, which I believe to be the true state of the Cause, and which (by the blessing of God) may reach to their satisfaction; when they see that they, into whose hands the Lord (to the wonderment of men) hath been pleased to put power, do follow the Lord, and accomplish his Word, aim at the fulfilling of his ends and design, denying themselves, that they may advance Christ Jesus in the Throne, and let him reign over them. The prayers, the expectation, and faith of the Saints, in the Prophecies and Promises of holy Scripture, are daily sounding in the ears of the Lord, for the downfall of Antichrist, and with him all humane Powers, Polities, Dominions, and Governments; and in the room thereof, we wait for the coming of the Kingdom of the Lord Jesus, who by his Divine Wisdom, Power, Government and Laws, given us (although hitherto sealed up in a great measure) in the holy Scriptures, will reign over all the Nations of the earth in his due time: I mean, the Lord Jesus will bring down all people, to be ruled by the Institutions, Laws, and Directions of the Word of God; not only in Church-Government and Administrations, but also in the Government and Administration of all affairs in the Commonwealth. And then Christ reigneth, when all things among men, are done by the direction of the word of his mouth: his Kingdom is then come amongst us, when his will is done on earth, as it is done in heaven, where no Humane or Angelical Policy or Wisdom doth guide any thing, but all is done by Divine direc-

direction (a); and so it shall be on earth, when, and where Christ reigneth.

(a) Psal. 103. 20. Angels do his commandment, hearkening to the voice of his word.

Dan. 2. 34, 35, &c. *It is Propheſied, Dan.* 2. 34, 35, *&c.* Thou ſaweſt till that a ſtone was cut out, without hands, which ſmote the image upon his feet that were of iron and clay, and brake them to pieces. 35. Then was the iron, the clay, the braſs, the ſilver, and the gold, broken to pieces together, and became like the chaff of the ſummer threſhing-floors; and the wind carried them away, that no place was found for them: and the ſtone that ſmote the image, became a great mountain, and filled the whole earth, *&c. which Prophecie doth clearly foreſhew the forenamed points: for there is an epitomy of all the Monarchies, Governments, and Polities of men, who have had their Humane Glory in this world: the laſt, and ſtrongeſt of all which Dominions is the Roman; ſo mixed and interwoven in many States, by the combining of that dirty Roman Religion, with civil Powers, as that when that ſtone Chriſt, by his faithful Inſtruments, ſhall overthrow, and beat in pieces that Religion, they muſt and ſhall, according as it is written, beat down withall the ſtrongeſt Iron ſinews of civil States, which are propugnators, and ſupporters thereof, whether profeſſed or ſecretly.*

Yea, moreover, when Chriſt that ſtone, ſhall by his choſen Inſtruments, ſmite in pieces all the Romiſh Religion, and civil States, which are complicated with it, and ſupporters of it, (who though they greatly care not

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for it (a)*, yet for their own ends they are ſupporters of it) then, down cometh the whole Image from top to bottom; all Dominions and Governments of man, by Humane Policy, formes of Government and Laws in all places whatſoever, in Gods order and time; who by their fall ſhall be ſo paſhed in pieces, that though they were before, a terrour to men, yet now they ſhall be light and contemptible things, of no more account with men then duſt or chaff: becauſe Divine inſtitutions, both of Government and Laws, ariſing in the room of Humane, they will be quite darkened, even as the Stars are by the riſing-Sun: for in the room of them ſhall ariſe the Government of the Lord Jeſus, who by the Word of his Mouth, written in the holy Scriptures, ſhall order all affairs among men; And great ſhall be his Dominion: for the Stone Chriſt ſhall grow to be a mountain filling the whole earth: all men ſubmitting to be ruled by the Word, in civil, as well as Church-affairs.*

(a) *Dan.* 2. 43. They ſhall not cleave one to another, even as iron is not mixt with clay.

Now it ſeemeth to me that the Lord Chriſt is now accompliſhing theſe things in great Britain. *The faithful Brethren in* Scotland *gave the firſt blow at the dirty toes, and feet of this Image; with whom the faithful brethren in* England, *preſently concurred. But the Iron of the Civil State, ſtuck ſo faſt to the miry clay, that according to the Word of Chriſt, they are (beyond all the thoughts of men) both fallen together; they are fallen, they are fallen, they are both fallen together: Oh that men would therefore praiſe the Lord, for his faithful Word, and goodneſs; for his mercy endureth for ever! and all his faithful Word ſhall be accompliſhed. Amen, Amen.*

There be many other Prophecies of holy Scriptures touching these things (as the Saints well know) the application whereof to what is now done in England, *I will not undertake, it being a worke rather for a Treatise then a Preface. Yea, some Prophecies, (as I apprehend) do more particularly describe what is now done; but I shall not mention them, hoping that others will do it, according as the Lord shall please to open that door.*

Now these things being so, it doth deeply concern those holy and faithful ones of the Lord, who have been Instruments in his hand, to accomplish these great and glorious works, whether by Councils or Wars, or otherwise, to be wise, and discerning of the times, to know what Israel ought to do, in this great work of bringing about the Kingdom to David, *to lay the Government upon his shoulders: that after all these clouds and storms, the peaceable Kingdom of Christ may rise up, and the Lord may reign in* England. *Much is spoken of the rightful Heir of the Crown of* England, *and the injustice of casting out the right Heir: but Christ is the only right Heir of the Crown of* England (a), *and of all other Nations also* (b); *and he is now come to take possession of his Kingdom, making* England *first in that blessed work of setting up the Kingdom of the Lord Jesus: and in order thereunto, he hath cast down not only the miry Religion, and Government of Antichrist, but also the former form of civil Government, which did stick so fast unto it, until by an unavoidable necessity, it fell with it; which while it stood, and as it stood, was too high*

(a) *Psa.* 2, 8. The uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession. (b) *Rev.* 11.15. The Kingdoms of this world are become the Kingdoms of the Lord, and of his Christ; and he shall reign, &c.

high to ſtoop to the Lord Jeſus, to be ruled by his command. Now therefore by theſe preparations made by the naked Arm of the Lord Jeſus, to ſet up his Kingdom in England, *he calleth upon thoſe Worthies into whoſe hands he hath betruſted the managing of this great work, now to advance Chriſt, not man; not themſelves, but Chriſt; which doing, taketh off theſe heavy imputations of inveſting themſelves with Authority, of taking the Inheritance to themſelves--- God forbid, God forbid, that it ſhould enter into our hearts, to think ſo unworthily, ſo unchriſtianly, ſo diſhonourably of ſuch renowned ſervants of the Lord, who have ſo graciouſly, and humbly ever given unto the Lord, all the glory of all their Victories, that now at laſt they ſhould rob him of his Crown, Dominion, and Government; which to ſet up in* England, *hath been the mark and Scope of all theſe late great works of God; and if it be not yet done, ſurely it is either becauſe the Lord hath not yet fully revealed to them, what his will is they ſhould do in the midſt of theſe confuſions, or becauſe the unquietneſs of the times permits them not to go about it.*

That which the Lord now calleth England *to attend, is not to ſearch humane Polities and Platformes of Government, contrived by the wiſdom of man; but as the Lord hath carried on their works for them, ſo they ought to go unto the Lord, and enquire at the Word of his mouth, what Platforme of Government he hath therein commanded and preſcribed; and humble themſelves to embrace that as the beſt, how mean ſoever it may ſeem to Humane Wiſdom. Faith can ſee beauty, power and glory in any Divine inſtitution, when Humane Wiſdom may think it weak and contemptible.*

There is undoubtedly a forme of Civil Government instituted by God himself in the holy Scriptures; whereby any Nation may enjoy all the ends and effects of Government in the best manner, were they but perswaded to make trial of it. We should derogate from the sufficiency and perfection of the Scriptures, if we should deny it. The Scripture is able throughly to furnish the man of God (whether Magistrate in the Commonwealth, or Elder in the Church, or any other) unto every good work.

And when a Christian people are to choose their Government, should they take their Patern from the Nations of the World (a), *we know what an offence that would be to Christ, who intends to Rule them himself, by his own Divine Patern and Direction. Christ is now about to ruine the Roman-Image; Wisdom therefore it is, to look above all such Paterns to find out a Divine Platforme, taught by God himself, which he will delight to bless unto such men as shall submit unto it.*

(a) 1 Sam. 8. 5. Make us a King to judge us like all the Nations.

And if there be a Divine institution of civil Government that may suit the State of England, *I doubt not but all the godly in the Land would chuse that way of Government before any other in the World: for every Divine institution hath a Divine blessing in it. Yea, God himself is more eminently present, ruling thereby; and the Spirit of God doth breath in and bless every institution of the Word, to make it powerful and effectual to attain its end better, and more effectually then any Humane Ordinance and Institution in the World can do. The Promise also of Gods blessing and protection is unto all those, who walk in Scripture-ways and Ordinances. Moreover, that uncomfortable difference among the people of God about that great business of changing the Go-*

Government in England, *would hereby be reconciled, and all things brought unto an holy peace, every one readily yielding that the Lord Jesus should assume the Soveraignty, to appoint them what Government to set up over them: and would most readily embrace that, whereby the Lord himself, should reign in* England.

I think it needful to insert this word of Apology for my self; That it pleased the Lord of his free mercy to me (in my self being no way fitted for such a work) to put me on, to instruct our poor, blind, and dark Indians, in the good knowledge of the Lord: who when (through grace) they tasted of the knowledge of God, of themselves, of Christ and redemption by him; they desired to leave their wild and scattered manner of life, and come under Civil Government and Order; which did put me upon search, after the mind of the Lord in that respect. And this VOw I did solemnly make unto the Lord concerning them; that they being a people without any forme of Government, and now to chuse; I would endeavour with all my might, to bring them under the Government of the Lord only: Namely, that I would instruct them to imbrace such Government, both Civil and Ecclesiastical, as the Lord hath commanded in the holy Scriptures; and to deduce all their Laws from the holy Scriptures, that so they may be the Lords people, ruled by him alone in all things. Which accordingly they have begun to do through grace, covenanting with the Lord, in a day of fasting and prayer, to be the Lords people; and to receive that forme of Government, which they had learned to be a Divine institution in the holy Scriptures. This occasion did first put me upon this Study, who am no Statesman, nor acquainted with matters of that nature; but

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only spend my time in the Study of the holy Book of God. But having collected by the Lords help out of the holy Scripture this following forme of Government: and seeing the excellent harmony and order thereof, both in the several Courts, gradually ascending one above another, and all cases among the people coming under such a certain, and orderly way of receiving speedy issue; and all Appeals, having such a free and unprejudiced passage, in their gradual ascent, even to the highest, and final determination: These and such other things made me think, that it is a most desirable, and peaceable forme of Government, and suitable to any Christian people, who reverence the Word of God; yea, the more eminent and Christian they be, the more suitable it is for them.

Especially also considering, that though the single form of tens, fifties, hundreds, and thousands, will be but of small capacity in great Commonwealths, and populous Cities: yet the superiour orders, of Myriades or ten thousands, fifty thousands, hundred thousands, and thousand thousands, are exceeding comprehensive, to extend Government to the greatest people; and yet with that certain and peaceable order (without any interfering or confusion) for speedy Justice, and determination of all Causes, as that it seemeth to me to be the most excellent Government that ever was in the World. And adding to this, above all considerations and commendations, that it is a DIVINE INSTITUTION, sprung from heavenly wisdom commanded in Scripture, filled with the Spirit of God, which is able to carry on the Wheels of this Government, with a most irresistible and successful force and power, to the attainment of all the ends of Government among men most effectually.

Yea,

Yea, it seemeth to me, that this is that forme of Government, by which Christ meaneth to rule all the Nations on earth according to the Scriptures. Yea farther, repenting-believing Israel and Judah, *I believe, shall serve and obey Christ in this way of Civil Government; and who knoweth but our obedience hereunto, may hasten and farther their coming in?*

I would not exceed bounds of humble modesty; yet let me make bold to adventure the producing a farther Meditation, touching the Divinity and heavenly excellency of this Government of the Lord; namely, that the Angels of Heaven are governed by this order of Government, according as it is applyable to their condition. It is past all doubt, that there is an heavenly order, (I do not say Judicature, as with us) among the Angels: for as Hell is a place of confusion, so heaven of order; and if God is the God of order in the Church, whereby the place of his feet is beautified; much more is heaven beautified, by a most heavenly order of the Church there residing. And if Solomons *Court was in that respect of a ravishing glory, namely, by the order of it, and of his attendants: much more is heaven in an excellent order, and all the Angels the holy attendants of Gods Throne, attending in comely order. And if the order of* Solomons *Court, was one effect of his great wisdom, can we think that the infinite wisdom of God, attended by Angels, Spirits of such wonderful wisdom, should not be attended in a most glorious order, and his attendantss excellently beautified, by walking in an heavenly order? therefore there is an heavenly order among them. And that it is this order of tens, hundreds, thousands, &c. doth appear in several Scriptures, where we find menti-*

on made of them in this order; wherein it is observable, that so great is the number of them, that they are not mentioned in their single order; but the lowest that I have observed, is Myriades of Angels, Heb. 12. 22. and so the Saints shall find them ordered when they come to heaven (a). They are also mentioned by the highest degree of the Superior order, viz. thousands of thousands; and not only so, but by a Supreme order, viz. Myriades of Myriades, Rev. 5. 11. which I call Supreme, being the highest I find mentioned in Scripture: but whether that be the highest order of Angels, is not revealed that I know of: but thus it seemeth unto me, that the Angels are in this order of Government. Likewise the Saints in heaven seem to be in the same order; for when Christ cometh to judgement, and all the Saints with him, 1 Thes. 4. 13. they shall come in this order, Jude, vers. 14. With Myriades of his Saints, behold the Lord cometh.

(a) *Mat.* 26. 53. Christ maketh mention of twelve Legions of Angels, for his present assistance, if he thought good; which is all one with Myriades.

Now if this be the order of Government in Heaven, what an heaven upon earth shall that be, when all the Kingdoms and Nations on the earth shall be so ruled? and then shall the will of God be done on earth, as it is done in heaven, when he reigneth over men on earth, in the same order of Government as he doth in heaven (b).

(b) It is not nothing, that when Christ fed the people miraculously, he set them down by hundreds, and by fifties, *Mar.* 6. 40. as if Christ delighted in that order.

Let me be yet farther bold to propound another Meditation, under the correction of better judgements, according as I do the former, upon that text Dan. 7. 10. where

where is set forth the judgement of God executed upon Antichrist. Many things might be shewed out of the context, to prove, that it is not the last judgement, which is there spoken of. The means of execution of that judgment, is by the Wars of the Lamb, the Lord Jesus, as appears in the Book of the Revelation; *and the people executing those Wars, by this text seem to be a people ruled by this order of Government: which if it be so, may it not give some light to find out the ten Kings, which shall hate the Whore, make her desolate and naked, eat her flesh, and burn her with fire?*

These things considered, touching the excellency of this forme of Government, and especially the Divinity of it, and now also by a wonderful work of God, England *being in a capacity to chuse unto themselves a new Government, and in such deep perplexity about that great Question, where to set their foot in peace; some pleading for the unjustice of casting off the Kingly Government, others unsatisfied with the present, and all expecting what will be the conclusion. And seeing no Humane Forme, quiet and safe, to set down their foot upon, in rest and tranquillity, hereby all hearts are perplexed, sighing up to heaven for direction what to do, and where to finde rest and quiet to the Land. By this means, all hearts are prepared to embrace any help or counsel from the Lord; and when they have wearied themselves with differences, they will gladly all concur together, to set open the door, to let in the Lord Jesus, to give them rest; who hath been all this while knocking at the door, by these perplexing troubles: that his Government might be on all hands galdly embraced, and himself finde a free and peaceable enterance, to be-*

gin his bleſſed and waited-for reign over the Nations of the earth, according as it is Propheſied in the holy Scriptures.

Therefore in the name of the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, the King of Saints (whoſe Kingdom I deſire to advance, with all my might and heart) I do beſeech thoſe choſen, and holy and faithful Saints, who by Councils at Home, or by Wars in the Field, have fought the Lords Battels againſt Antichriſt, and have carried on the Cauſe of Chriſt hitherunto, That you would now ſet the Crown of England *upon the head of Chriſt, whoſe only true inheritance it is, by the gift of his Father* (a): *Let him be your* JUDGE, *Let him be your* LAW-GIVER, *Let him be your* KING! *take the patern and form of your Government, from the Word of his Mouth, which will have power over the Conſciences of all the people of the Land, and compoſe all differences about that point, into a ſweet harmony of obedience and ſubjection to Chriſt our Lord and King, with one heart and conſent; and will bring about all the people with one heart, and ſhoulder, to promote the deſigns of Chriſt, and yours alſo, when they ſee that yours are not for your ſelves, but for the Lord, to accompliſh all the remainder of the great works of the Lord, even until Antichriſt be deſtroyed, and the Throne of the Beaſt burnt with fire, and the Kingdom of the Lord Jeſus ſet up in many Nations.*

(a) *Pſa.* 2. 8. Ask of me, and I will give thee the uttermoſt parts of the earth for thy poſſeſſion.

You bleſſed ones of the Lord, who have ſo eminently, beyond the wont of Conquerors, humbled and abaſed your ſelves, as no-bodies in the work, and aſcribed all the praiſe and glory of your Valiant Atchievments, unto

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the Lord Jesus, whom by faith you did always see fighting for you, and (to your admiration) getting the Victory for you! You that have with an holy boldness of faith, made those dreadful appeals (unheard of in other Stories) unto the Lord Jesus, to witness to the sincerity of your Cause and Conscience by his own arm, and in all your straights have never found him to fail you, or forsake you; but still made you Conquerors, not only of your Enemies, but (which is more) of your selves also, not to arrogate praise unto your selves; nor to improve your Victories beyond the bounds of Christian patience and love to the conquered; and all for the honour and glory of Christ, and his grace; that his Name and Cause might find room and acceptance in the hearts of your Enemies, whom you therefore used like Christian Brethren, and not like Enemies.

Shall such holy ones as you, need perswasion to set that Crown upon the head of Christ, which he hath put into your hands to dispose of? where can you make a better choice, then to take the Lord to be your King? and where can you think to find, a better patern of Government, then in the Word of God? and where can you think to finde better Laws, then in the holy Scriptures?

This following Platform of Government, I do no farther urge, then you shall finde it to be purely deduced from the holy Scriptures. It is the holy Scriptures of God onely that I do urge, to be your onely Magna Charta, *by which you should be ruled in all things; which being, Christ is your King and Soveraign Lawgiver, and you are his people ruled by him in all things.*

And you my dear Brethren, the faithful Ministers of the Gospel of Christ, and all Christian Brethren, who do not yet see cause of submitting, and yielding unto this Change; I do beseech you to consider the times, and compare the Prophecies of Scripture, with the present providences; and see if you finde not all things to come to pass, according as it is written; and that these wonderful providences are not without Scripture-authority, and much to be regarded by the people of God. Nor be they the executions of Divine wrath upon either Church or World, by prophane hands, who act their own wills and lusts, though they accomplish Gods ends; but they be the pouring out of the wrath of God upon Antichrist, for his destruction, and overthrow of his Kingdom, by the hands of holy Saints, according to the command of Christ; Christ himself riding forth Victoriously among them, and performing his great works, written and foretold in the holy Scriptures. May not Queen Maries *coming to the Crown by the help of the Saints, be seasonably called to remembrance? or if not, yet now the time is come, to change Governments, and to cast down all at the foot of Christ, that he may Reign, and fill the Earth with the glory of his Government.*

No Oaths or Covenants of Gods People are against Christ, but in subordination to him, and to the advancement of his Kingdom. If therefore these great Changes are carried up to that head, that is the true scope, and end of those Vows and Promises. It were not lawful to terminate such a Vow or Covenant, as that is, upon any Person, Family or Creature; it were Idolatry; nor was it so; nor is it now broken,

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by breaking all Creatures in pieces, that ſtood in the way of obtaining the true end thereof, namely, the advancement of the Lord Jeſus, and his Kingdom.

I beſeech you therefore help forward this work, which Chriſt hath put into the hands of thoſe whom he hath made eminent, in accompliſhing the works of his glorious coming, to ſet up his Dominion on earth. Be not behind in bringing Chriſt to the Throne in England *! You, you, the holy Watchmen of the Lord, have given God no reſt by your unceſſant Prayers, for the bringing about what is now done; follow on therefore to follow the Lord, and, as Antichriſt falleth, with whatever elſe ſtood in the way of Chriſt: ſo now let Chriſt come in, and help ye forward the ſetting up of his Kingdom.*

I am bold to preſent this Scripture-Platform of Government, to publique view, (if advice ſo carry it) at this ſeaſon; becauſe I do believe it to be a Divine Inſtitution of a Civil Government; and ſeemeth to me to be ſuch, as will well ſuit the preſent condition of England, Scotland, *and* Ireland, *or any other religious people in the World, who fear the command of God, and tremble at his Word: and being perſwaded in my heart, that it is the minde of the Lord, that Nations ſhould be governed by Scripture-Inſtitutions, the time being come that the Lord is about to ſhake all the Earth, and throw down that great Idol of Humane Wiſdome in Governments, and ſet up Scripture-Government in the room thereof. It may pleaſe God to give acceptance unto this poor beginning, and move the hearts of ſuch as are wiſe,*

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to prosecute this design of Christ, and more accurately to search the Scriptures, to finde out the perfect will of God in this point, which yet is but in its birth, and dawning; many things being yet dim, and dark: in the morning twilight, we cannot see far before us, nor round about us; but the Rising-Sun, will through grace, bring greater light with him.

As for such wholsome, just, and wise Laws, as any Nation hath already made, the Wisdome of the Lord will teach his People to refer them to their Scripture-principles, demonstrating the truth and equity thereof, by the Word of God, whereby they will appear to be the deducts from the Word of God; and hence they that are governed by them, are governed by the Lord; they that break them sin against the Lord, by breaking his Commandment and Law.

It were a Work worthy the labours of the best Divines, and the best of Men, to demonstrate the equity of all the wholsome and wise Laws of ENGLAND *by the Word of God; the effects of which Work would be of admirable consequence to sanctifie the whole Land, to make the Rulers more expressly to govern for the Lord, and the People to obey the Lord, in obeying their Governours; and so the Lord himself should Reign over them.*

My continual Prayer in this behalf, at the Throne of Grace is, that the Lord would so far scatter those black Clouds, which do darken the mindes of God's People

The Preface.

People in ENGLAND, *that they may see some Beams of the brightness of* CHRIST *his coming to Reign; and that the Lord would please to bow their divided hearts, to meet with one consent and accord, to make* CHRIST *their* LAW-GIVER, *and* JUDGE, *and* KING, *in whom alone they shall finde settlement and assured peace.*

Amen, Amen.

THE

THE CHRISTIAN COMMONWEALTH:

OR,

The Civil Polity of the Rising Kingdom of Jesus Christ.

CHAP. I.

IT is the Commandment of the Lord, that a people should enter into Covenant with the Lord to become his people, even in their Civil Society, as well as in their Church-Society (*a*). Whereby they submit themselves to be ruled by the Lord in

(a) Deut. 29. 10, 11, 12, 13. *You stand this day all of you, before the Lord your God; your Captains of your Tribes, your Elders and your Officers, with all the men of Israel.* (11.) *Your little ones, your wives, and the stranger that is in thy Camp,* &c. (12.) *That thou shouldest enter into Covenant with the Lord thy God, and into his oath which he maketh with thee this day,* (13.) *That he may establish thee to day for a people unto himself, and that he may be to thee a God, as he hath said unto thee, and as he hath sworn unto thy fathers, to Abraham, to Isaac and to Jacob.*

all things, receiving from him, both the platform of their Government, and all their Laws; which when they do, then Christ reigneth over them in all things, they being ruled by his Will, and by the Word of his Mouth (*b*).

(a) Isai. 33. 22. *The Lord is our Judge, the Lord is our Law-giver, the Lord is our King, he shall save us.*

The substance of which Covenant, and subjection of themselves unto the Lord, to be ruled by him in all things, is this. That they do humbly confess their corruption by nature, and lost condition; that they acknowledge the free grace (*c*) of God, in their redemption by Christ, and in the promulgation of the Gospel unto them, and making application thereof effectually unto their souls: and therefore the Lord hath shewed his everlasting Love unto them, and caused them inwardly by faith, to give up themselves unto him, to be for ever his, to love, serve, and obey him, in all his Word and Commandments: so now they do outwardly, & solemnly with the rest of Gods people joyn together so to do in their Civil Polity, receiving from the Lord, both the platform of their civil Government, as it is set down (in the essentials of it) in the holy Scriptures; and also all their Laws, which they resolve through his grace, to fetch out of the Word of God, making

(c) Deut. 26. 1. *ad* 12. *I profess this day unto the Lord thy God, that I am come into the Countrey, which the Lord thy God sware unto thy fathers to give us*, &c. vers. 5. *And thou shalt speak, and say before the Lord thy God, A Syrian ready to perish was my father, and he went down into Egypt*, &c. vers. 7. *And when we cried unto the Lord, he heard us*, &c. ver. 8. *And the Lord brought us forth out of Egypt with a mighty hand*, &c.

making that their only *Magna Charta*; and accounting no Law, Statute or Judgement valid, farther then it appeareth to arise and flow from the Word of God.

Such as with a lively faith enter into or walk in this Covenant, do perform every Act (wherein they are free from temptation) of civil conversation among men (*a*) by faith in obedience unto God. Instructing, that all should do so, who take this Covenant; and if they do not, they are guilty of breach of Covenant, before God. A willing subjection of a mans self to Christ in this Covenant, is some hopeful sign of some degree of faith in Christ, and love to God; and as a good preparative for a more neer approach to Christ in Church-fellowship, and Covenant: he that is willing to serve Christ by the Polity of the second Table civilly, is in some degree of preparation to serve him, by the Polity of the first Table Ecclesiastically.

(a) 1 Cor. 10. 31. *Whether ye eat or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God.*

The Child is implicitely comprehended in the Fathers Covenant (*a*), the Wife is explicitely comprehended in her Husbands, insomuch that in her Widowhood she and her Family are one, under the order of the Government of God.

(a) Deut. 29. 14, 15. *Neither with you onely do I make this Covenant this day, but with him that standeth here this day before the Lord our God, and with him that is not here with us this day.*

The particular form of Government, which is approved of God (*b*), instituted by *Moses* (*c*) a-

(b) Exod. 18. 23. *If thou shalt do this thing, and God command thee so.*

(c) Exod. 18. 24. *Moses hearkened, and did all.*

mong the sons of Israel, (and profitable to be received by any Nation or People, who reverence the command of God, and tremble at his Word) is this; that they chuse (*d*) unto themselves Rulers of thousands (*e*), of hundreds, of fifties and of tens, who shall govern according to the pure, holy, righteous, perfect and good Law of God(*f*); written in the Scriptures of the Old and New Testament.

(d) 18. 21. *Thou shalt provide able men.* With Deut. 1. 13. *Take ye wise men, and I will make them Rulers.* (e) Exod. 18. 25. Deut. 1. 15. (f) Deut. 1. 17. *Fear not the face of man, for the judgement is Gods.* 2 Chro. 19. 6. *And said to the Judges, Take heed what ye do: for ye judge not for man, but for the Lord, who is with you in the judgement:* Ezek. 44. 24. *They shall judge it according to my judgement.*

The forming of which Platforme of Government, deduced from the Scriptures, is as followeth.

CHAP.

CHAP II.

THe several degrees of tens, fifties, hundreds, and thousands, may fitly be called orders of men, governed by God, the God of order (*a*).

(a) Isa. 9. 7. *Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his Kingdom, to order it.*

Which orders of men are
1. Those of the single Platforme.
2. Those of the Superior arising upon the first.

First for the single Platform, which is Gods Standard, according to which the Superior is delineated, or measured out. God hath commanded that ten men should chuse unto them a Ruler of ten.

Hence, if they be not ten, they cannot chuse unto them a Ruler of ten. Hence also the Ruler maketh the eleventh man; or rather, is the head (*b*) of the order of ten.

(b) Exod. 18. 25. *Make them heads over the people, Rulers of tens, &c.*

Hence also one Ruler of ten, may Rule over nineteen men; but if they become twenty, then by Gods institution, they must chuse another Ruler of ten; for God hath said, *Chuse you Rulers of tens.*

Servants, or Sons living with their Parents, as in

(c) Gal. 4. 1. *The heir so long as he is a child, differeth nothing from a servant.*

in the condition of Servants (*c*), they may not explicitely, politically, personally, chuse publick Rulers; while they live under the Authority of Family-government, they are not personally capable of interest in publick Political Elections: it is enough to attain Gods ends, that they be virtually comprehended in their Fathers Covenant.

But if they Marry, or live in the state of allowed publick Free-men, then are they capable of, & are bound personally to act, in the choice of their publick Rulers. The Rulers of the Father are virtually Rulers of the Child: but when the child putteth forth an act of choice, he hath liberty to chuse, in due order, another Ruler of ten, unto whom he doth personally submit himself: for all men are commanded to chuse unto themselves Rulers.

By that one act of chusing his Ruler of ten, and subjecting himself unto him, he doth chuse, and subject himself unto all the Superior orders, under whom his Ruler of ten is ruled.

No man may lawfully, or without sin, live out of the order of Gods Government: and should any man refuse to chuse and subject himself unto the same, he cannot justly challenge any priviledge, benefit, or protection thereby, though his virtual interest (in such as have it) hath hold upon him, until his actual choice doth more expresly engage him; and Love will improve every thing for the good of those, who know not what is good for themselves. He is beneath the condition of a

stranger,

stranger, who shall Apostatize from the Government of the Lord; yea, beneath the condition of Barbarians, who are not yet come in, either by themselves, or their Progenitors.

As the Ruler of ten may rule over more then ten, even any number under twenty: so it is with the other orders, One Ruler of fifty, may rule over nine orders of ten; but if they become ten, then they must chuse another Ruler of fifty: for the Lord hath said, *Chuse you Rulers of fifties*; that is, every five orders of ten shall chuse a Ruler of fifty.

Again, one Ruler of an hundred, may rule over three orders of fifties; but if they become four orders of fifties, then two of them must chuse another Ruler: for God hath said, *Chuse Rulers of hundreds*; that is, of ten orders of tens.

Again, one Ruler of a thousand, may rule over nineteen orders of an hundred; but if they become twenty orders, then they must by Gods institution chuse another Ruler of a thousand: for the Lord hath said, *Chuse you Rulers of thousands.*

Hence one Ruler of a thousand may, in case all the orders under him be at the fullest, rule over 8436. men; which ordinarily, amounteth to 33687 souls: which doth thus appear.

One Ruler of ten may rule over nineteen men.

One-

One Ruler of fifty may rule over nine orders of ten; and nine times nineteen, maketh one hundred seventy one.

One Ruler of an hundred, may rule over three orders of fifty; and thrice 171, maketh 413.

One Ruler of a thousand, may rule over nineteen orders of an hundred; and nineteen times 413, maketh 7847.

Add therefore to the people, their Rulers, thus:

One Ruler of 50. with his nine Rulers of ten, make ten Rulers.

One Ruler of an 100. may rule over three orders of 50. which maketh 30. Rulers.

One Ruler of a thousand, may have under him nineteen Rulers of an hundred. So that 19. times 30. and 19. added to them,

	makes 589	Rulers
Add to them	7847	People
Summa totalis is	8436	

And generally among mankind, for one head of a Family, there be at least three more souls of women and children: so that four times 8436. amounteth to 33687. soules. But it will be rare for all orders to be full at once.

Again,

Again, these orders of men, may be multiplied thus: when such as are Supernumerary in several orders, agree together to make another order. For example, if two Rulers of ten, have each of them fifteen men under them, then five men of one order, and five of the other order, may agree together to make another, a new order: and so in all other orders it may be.

But if they do this, if they make a new order because they desire it, and not because the Word of the Lord commandeth it; when they multiply orders by choice, and not by necessity of institution: then their next Superiors shall guide and direct them in peace and mutual love: for *Moses* guided the people in all their Elections (*a*).

(a) Exod. 18. 21, 25. *Thou shalt provide able men.* 25. *Moses chose able men.* Deut. 1. 15. *So I took the chief of your Tribes.*

If they cannot agree, then they may appeal to their next Superiours, and so unto the highest (*b*) Council, if need be: For the Council is (in ordinary dispensation) in *Moses* stead; and the Scriptures are the Mouth of God, at which they must enquire, and by the guidance thereof determine of all Cases, so far as the Lord giveth light; and until the mind of God be known, the Case must stay, whatever it be (*c*).

(b) Deut. 1. 17. *The case that is too hard for you, bring it unto me.*

(c) Num. 15. 34. *And they put him in ward, because it was not declared what should be done unto him.* Numb. 9. 8. *Stand still, and I will hear what the Lord will command concerning you.*

CHAP. III.

THe Lord hath given this Commandment in the ordering of his Government, that judgment should be executed speedily (*a*); and also that it should be managed with the greatest respect to the ease, both of the Governours, and People (*b*).

(a) Ezra 7.26. *Let judgment be executed speedily upon them.* Eccles. 8. 11. *Because sentence against an evil work is not executed speedily, therefore the heart of the sons of men, is fully set in them to do evil.* (b) Exod. 18. 17, 18, 22, 23. *This thing is not good; thou wilt surely wear away, both thou and this people that is with thee:* ver. 22. *So shall it be easier:* ver. 13. *Thou shalt be able to endure, and all the people shall go to their place in peace,* viz. *having judgement among themselves in their own Quarters, and places of abode, and not be troubled to come to the chief Court, with every cause.*

But particular times, means and other circumstances, the Lord hath not particularly commanded (*c*). Hence it is left unto the wisdom of the Rulers, to order time, means and other circumstances, for the best, and most effectual attainment of the forementioned speedy and easie determination and execution of Judgement, in all Cases whatsoever, and in all places, Cities, or Towns where the people dwell (*a*).

(c) Exod. 18. 22. *Let them judge the people at all seasons.*

(a) Exod. 18. 23. *All the people shall go to their own place in peace.*

Hence again, it well accordeth with Gods institution,

stitution, that every order do co-habit together (*b*) as neer as may be; because that doth tend to facilitate both the watch, and work of the Lords Government.

(b) Deut. 1. 15. *I took the chief of your Tribes, and made them heads over you.*

Hence also limits of place (*c*) (in a general observation with allowance to some particular exceptions, as prudence and piety may require) may be useful to attain this end.

(c) Deut. 21. 2, 3. *Thy Elders and Judges shall measure unto the Cities about, and the City which is next unto the slain man.* Deut. 16. 18. *Judges shalt thou make in all thy gates throughout thy Tribes.*

Hence again, if any shall remove his habitation to a more remote place; meet it is that he do change his Rulers, by chusing a Ruler of ten in the place whither he goeth to dwell: and hence it is meet that such removings and changes be made by a due approbation of the Rulers whence he goeth, and with the acceptance of those to whom he removeth, lest by such unstable changes, as some may affect, they may slip out from under the Government of the Lord, at least from under the watch and use thereof, though from the right thereof they cannot, because it is a general command to honour thy Father and thy Mother; and lest by the confluence of unruly persons to a place more remisly governed, the Government of the Lord should be undermined, and scandalized.

Because sin will grow apace, like ill weeds, if it

be not always watched, and often weeded out; and fire of strife will soon flame out, if it be not speedily suppressed and quenched: and it edifieth many ways, that justice should be speedily done; especially it promoteth peace and piety.

Hence it is meet, that Rulers of ten appoint one day in a week, solemnly to hear and determine Causes, and guide the common Affairs of his ten, for the more orderly, easie, and speedy proceeding of justice and peace, which are facilitated and expedited, by a stated and appointed time (*a*).

(a) Exod. 18. 26.

They judged the people at all seasons: עת *doth frequently in Scripture signifie a stated time.*

Again, it is meet that the Ruler of fifty keep the Court of six, consisting of five Rulers of ten, and himself the Ruler of them, once in a moneth, for the more solemn proceeding of Justice, & Appeals, if need be: because the higher Cases ascend, the more solemnity is in them (*b*); and need the more time and deliberation.

(b) Exod. 18. 22.

Every great matter they shall bring unto thee.

I call these a Court, because they are an Assembly of Judges, among whom God promiseth to stand (*c*). Six is the lowest number of this Court; but they may be more, according as the orders of ten be more under a Ruler of fifty; but they cannot exceed ten; because a Ruler of fifty cannot by Gods institution, have more then nine orders of ten under him.

(c) Psal. 82. 1.

Again,

Again, it is meet that the Ruler of an hundred keep the Court of three, consisting of two Rulers of fifty, and himself the Ruler of them, four times in the year, upon the former grounds.

Three is the lowest number of this Court, and it cannot exceed four; because by Gods institution, he cannot have more then three orders of fifty under him.

Again, it is meet that the Ruler of a thousand keep the Court of eleven, consisting of ten Rulers of an hundred, and himself the Ruler of them, twice in a year: and here judgement runneth with greatest Solemnity and Majesty; I say, Greatest in the single platform.

Eleven is the lowest number of this Court; but there may be more, according as the orders of an hundred under him be multiplied; but they cannot exceed twenty, because he cannot have above nineteen orders of an hundred under him.

It is necessary that every Court have such Officers (*a*) to attend, as are necessary to accomplish and execute those ends for which the Lord hath instituted those Courts: because the appointment of the end, doth command all means requisite for the attainment of that end, being such as accords with Justice and Prudence.

(a) Deut. 16. 18. *Judges and Officers shalt thou make,*

Vide Ainsworth in Loc.

It is also necessary to have persons (*a*); and all other Instruments, for the inflicting of all kindes of Punishments, which the Law of God appointeth.

(a) Lev. 24. 12. Num. 15 34. *They put him in ward.*

But

But touching the several Punishments of Cost, Shame, or Smart; and touching the several ways of putting to Death, by Stoning, Burning, Strangling, or by the Sword; as also touching Banishment, I am here silent. They more properly appearing in the handling of such Laws which do inflict several punishments, according to the demerit of the sin, or use of terrour unto others, proportioning them to the Standard in the holy Scriptures.

CHAP.

CHAP. IV.

UPon the forenamed grounds of speedy Justice, for the stablishing of firme peace, all Causes betwixt man and man, pertaining to the Congnizance of the Ruler of ten, must be put upon Suit or Tryal, within the space of one moneth (*b*). Cases belonging to the Court of six, must be put upon Suit or Tryal within the space of three moneths. Causes belonging to the Court of three, must be put upon Suit or Tryal, within the space of nine moneths. Causes belonging to the Court of eleven, must be put upon Suit or Tryal, in the space of one year and half; or else to be frustrate, and lose the priviledge of receiving judgement by man; unless it appear that the providence of God did hinder, or that the Defendant or Delinquent party did disappoint it: in those cases it may be admitted to Tryal, and receive Judgement, though it be of a longer standing.

(b) Lev. 19. 17. *Thou shalt not suffer sin upon him.*

But Criminal Offences are to be judged, at the time when, and in the place where they be discovered, and that with the most speed that may be.

Such Cases as are difficult, weighty, and worthy such attendance, and cannot attain an acceptable issue in the Court where they firstly appertain, may ascend from Court to Court, either by

Appeal

Appeal, or by Transmission to the Court of eleven. And whatsoever Cause of weight cannot receive issue there, may yet ascend either by Appeal or Transmission to the higheſt Council (*a*), where by Gods appointment it muſt receive final determination (*b*).

(a) Exod. 18. 22. *Great matters they ſhall bring to thee. 26. Hard matters they brought to Moſes.*

Deut. 17. 8, 9. *If there ariſe a matter too hard for thee,* &c. *thou ſhalt come to the Prieſts, Levites and Judges that ſhall be in thoſe days.*

(b) *And thou ſhalt do according to the ſentence,* &c. Deut. 17. 10.

In leſſer Commonwealths, where there be no Rulers or Courts of the Superiour order, Caſes aſcend to the higheſt Council from the Court of eleven: but where there be Rulers and Courts of the Superiour order, there the Cauſe muſt aſcend from the Court of eleven in the ſingle Platform, to the Court of one Myriade, or the loweſt Court in the Superiour order; and ſo proceed until it come to the Supreme Council.

Every Appeal in this Platform of Government which the Lord hath inſtituted, doth aſcend to an higher Court, and to other Judges. There is one of the Judges from whom he appealeth, a member of the Court to which he doth Appeal, truly to inform the Court of the Reaſons of their Judgement: and but one, leſt they ſhould ſway overmuch, and the Appealant want the priviledge of new and unprejudiced Judges.

Whoſoever ſhall trouble the free paſſage of Juſtice in the ending of Cauſes, through a perverſe will, or baſe ends, or captious and quarrelſome wit,

wit, besides the charges of such agitations, he is worthy of some other medicine, as may most effectually do him good, and warn others.

In all Courts, he that hath power to call the Court, hath a double Vote: as for example, in the Court of Three, if the Ruler of an hundred differ from the two Rulers of fifty, the Court is equally divided: if there be three Rulers of fifty, and one of them concur with the Ruler of an hundred, their sentence standeth.

When the Court is equally divided, it is a difficult Case, and must ascend to the Court next above them by Transmission; or if the lesser part of the Court oppose the sentence of the Court, as judging it sinful, then it must ascend by Transmission.

If a Judge of any Court shall oppose the rest in point of sin, without weighty and considerable grounds, in the judgement of the Court whither it ascends or is transmitted; his first offence shall be corrected with the charge of such transmission, and admonition from the higher Court: after, offences in like kind are to be considered and judged, by proportion to the process of Christ in the Church, even unto rejection from his Place and Office.

The highest *Council* is to consist of a convenient number of the most holy and able men (*a*) orderly chosen for that purpose, by all the orders of (*b*) men

(a) Num. 11. 16. *Whom thou knowest, to be Elders of the people.* With Exod. 18. 21. *Able men, such as fear God; men of truth, hating covetousness.* (b) Deut. 1. 13. *Take ye wise men.*

under their jurisdiction, every man in order having an equal voice therein, from among all the Elders of the people: both in the *Commonwealth*, and in the Churches (*c*), the biggest number being civil Elders (*d*).

(c) Deut. 17. 9. *And thou shalt come to the Priests, Levites, and Judges that shall be in those days, and enquire, and they shall shew thee,* &c. 2 Chro. 19. 8. *Moreover, in Jerusalem did Jehosaphat set of the Levites, and of the Priests, and of the chief of the fathers in Israel, for the judgement of the Lord, and for controversie.* Deut. 21. 2. *Then thy Elders and Judges shall come forth, and shall measure,* &c. ver. 5. *And the Priests the sons of Levi shall come neer, and by their word shall every stroke and every controversie be tryed.* Deut. 19. 17. *Both the men between whom the controversie is, shall stand before the Lord, before the Priests and Judges.* Ezek. 44. 24. *And in controversie they shall stand in judgement, and they shall judge it according to my judgement.* (d) Numb. 11. 16. *Gather to me seventy men of the Elders of Israel.* Vide Ainsw. in Loc. *Hence the Hebrews gather, that they were chose out of all the Tribes, and therefore there was not less then five of a Tribe, and so many of Levi, who before the institution of the Sanhedrim, were taken of God instead of the first born, to be Priests unto God: for they were taken to be Priests at Sinai,* Numb. 3. 14. *And this institution was at Kibroth-hattaavah,* Numb. 11. 34. with Numb. 31. 15, 16, 17.

The Lord commanded *Moses* that seventy Elders should stand with him before the Lord; hence there were seventy one of the Council, and *Moses* was the chief, and ordained the rest.

According to which patern, the people are to chuse their chief Ruler first; who being installed by some, instead of the whole people, must instal the rest, and is chief Ruler of the Supreme Council, who must call and manage their Assemblies.

As

As the overburdensomness of the work of Government by one man, was the ground of the institution of the forenamed orders of Government: so the overburdensomness of the work for one man to hear all hard Cases, and Appeals, together with other Cares to provide for the welfare of the people, was the ground of the institution of the Supreme Council (*a*).

(a) Deut. 1. 9. *I spake to you, and said, I am not able to bear you alone.* Numb. 11. 11. ad 16. ver. 11. *And Moses said unto the Lord, Wherefore hast thou afflicted thy servant, and wherefore have I not found favour in thy sight, that thou layest the burden of all this people upon me?* ver. 14. *I am not able to bear all the people alone, because it is too heavy for me.*

The conveniency of the number of this high Council, is thus to be measured, and judged by Gods Standard. Israel had at least three Millions of people, (though not one Million of men in order, or not much more: for the Souldiers were but six hundred thousand) now their Supreme Council consisted of seventy one; therefore that is the highest number that will be needed among men ordinarily; yea, though a people should be much bigger, I see not but that number may suffice: But that number is not limitted; because God denyeth not this Government to fifty who are the least Court, and a lesser number of men then the highest Council in Israel had, by Gods appointment; and if it be not limitted on the one side, so nor on the other.

Again, the lowest number of the Supreme Council that may be, is five; because that Coun-

cil must consist both of Magistrates, and Elders of Churches; Elders of both sorts; one of a sort sufficeth not, and the bigger part must be Magistrates.

This Council must alwaies be in being, personally or virtually, to give answer to all Cases propounded, touching the Law of God, and the application thereof, to any particular Person or Cause, and to take care for the general Protection, Provision, and Government of the whole, in truth, holiness, and peace.

CHAP.

CHAP. V.

THe duties of all the Rulers of the civil part of the Kingdom of Christ, are as followeth.

The Office and Duty of all the Rulers, is to govern the people in the orderly and seasonable practice of all the Commandments of God, in actions liable to Political observation, whether of piety and love to God, or of justice, and love to man with peace.

Hence they are keepers of both Tables, and are so to look that all the Commandments of God be observed, as to compel men to their undoubted duty, and punish them for their undoubted sins, errours and transgressions.

A Case, a Duty, a Sin, is said then to be undoubted, when either it is expresly, or by general approved consequence, commanded or forbidden in the Scriptures; or when it hath passed the circuit of Gods Polity, and received its final determination according to the Scriptures; unto which not to submit, is capital presumption.

Hence again, Rulers are eminently concerned to maintain the purity of Religion, with all care and power; holiness, truth, and peace being much concerned herein.

Hence again, all Rulers must be skilful in the Scriptures,

Scriptures; they must read and meditate in the same all the daies of their life, that thereby they may be enabled to do their Office faithfully, and religiously so long as they live.

Hence again, they are to give counsel and command for the well ordering of all the Publick Affairs of their people; both in Education of Youth, whether in Schools or other Occupations; in walking in their Callings, in their Neighbourhood, commerce and converse with men, in subjecting themselves to Government, with Religion, Justice and Peace.

CHAP.

CHAP. VI.

THe Office of the Ruler of ten, is to see all his people walk as becometh Gods people in their several places, furthering the same upon all occasions. And at appointed times to sit alone, to hear and determine Causes of Justice, and of evil conversation; to declare Gods sentence and counsel in every Case, and see it executed.

Provided it be with the consent and submission of the party or parties concerned.

All difficult Cases, and Appeals, he shall binde over to the Court of six; and Capitals in life, limb or banishment, to the Court of eleven.

These Rulers are next the people; hence they see them * most: and therefore they need be singularly wise, patient, loving, faithful, and zealously holy men. So great is his work and charge, that it had need extend but to a small compass. If he well perform his Office, it doth prevent much trouble to Superiour Courts.

* *Each other.*

The Office of the Ruler of fifty, is to see that all the Rulers of ten under him, be faithful in their Office and Duty; and to help on their work, in all Cases, and toward all persons, as he hath occasion.

As also to call and keep the Court of six in their seasons; where all Cases, pertaining to the publick good of all his order, and particular Cases be-

betwixt parties of the several of the orders of ten under him, are nextly to be tryed and determined, together with Appeals from any of the Rulers of ten under him: and difficult Cases transmitted from them to this Court.

This Court hath power to end strifes, judge Causes, declare and pronounce the sentence of Gods Word, in mulcts, and punishments, and see them executed. Difficult Cases they shall transmit; and also Appeals they shall bind over, unto the Court of three. But capitals in life, limb or banishment, to the Court of eleven.

The Office of the Ruler of an hundred, is to see that the Rulers of fifty under him, do perform their Office and Duty faithfully; to help them what lieth in him, in any of their works towards their Rulers of ten, or any particular person under him. Also all Causes which concern the Publick good of all Orders under him, are in his charge. And also to call and keep the Court of three, where Causes betwixt parties of his several orders of fifty, are properly to be tryed and determined; with Appeals from the Court of six, and such difficult Cases as that Court shall transmit to them.

This Court hath power to end all strifes, judge and determine Causes, declare and pronounce the sentence of Gods Word, in mulcts and punishments, and see them executed. Also to take care of the Publick good of all their Orders. Appeals, difficult Cases, and capitals in life and limb, and banishment, they shall bind over and transmit to the Court of eleven. The

The Office of the Ruler of a thousand, is to see that all the Rulers of hundreds under him, do perform their Office and duty faithfully; to help them what lieth in him in any part of their charge toward their Rulers of fifties, or Rulers of ten, or any person under him; also all Cases which concern the Publick good of all the orders under him, are in his care and charge. As also to call and keep the Court of eleven, where all Causes betwixt persons in several of his Hundreds, are properly belonging; with Appeals from the Court of three, and difficult Cases transmitted to them. Also all Cases which concern the Publick good of all the Orders under them.

Also all capital Cases of life, limb or banishment, belong this Court: because it is the highest and most solemn Judicatory in the single Platform, and fullest of Majesty. The highest punishment is fitly pronounced, in a more solemn Judicatory, then is the Court of six, or three; unless the smalness or paucity of the people have no higher.

Also Cases betwixt parties of several thousands belong to this Court: at the choice of the Plaintiff in which Court of eleven, either that which himself doth belong to, or that which his Adversary is under. But this consideration doth belong to lesser Commonwealths, where they have no Governour of the Superiour order, and yet more then one Ruler of a thousand.

This Court hath power to hear and judge all

Causes brought before them; declare and pronounce the sentence of Scripture, in all mulcts and punishments, even death it self, and see them executed.

Also to pronounce, and see executed, all such sentences as the Supreme Council doth determine, and remit unto them. Namely, thus it is in lesser Commonwealths, where there be no Courts of the Superiour order, difficult Cases they must transmit to the highest Council, and bind over Appeals unto them, where there be no Courts of the Superiour order, betwixt the Supreme Council and them.

The Office of the Supreme Council, is to see that all the Rulers of thousands, yea, all Rulers and Officers, of all orders and degrees, do their Office and Duty faithfully; and to receive difficult Cases and Appeals, from the Court of eleven; to search the Scriptures with all faithfulness, to find out the pure mind of God, impartially and sincerely to apply the Cause propounded thereunto; to declare the will of God in the Case, and so return it to the Court of eleven, whereto it appertaineth, there to receive judgement accordingly. And whosoever will do presumptuously, and not hearken unto that sentence, shall be put to death, *Deut.* 17. 11, 12.

In the single Platform, the Court of eleven is next to the Supreme Council, for transmission and remission of Causes; but where there be Courts of the Superiour order, it is not so.

Also they are to declare the Counsel and Will of

of God, touching War and Peace, and accordingly transmit the work to such of the Rulers as they judge most meet to accomplish the same.

Also to take care for, and provide means for Publick welfare and subsistence, by Trading, both Foraign and Domestick, Fishing, Tillage, *&c.* with all other necessary and useful Occupations.

Especially they are to take care for peace and truth in Religion, in all the Churches, and among all the people; and the propagation also thereof. As also the furtherance of all good learning in all the Liberal Arts and Sciences.

The Supreme Council, and all Courts, yea, and all Rulers, have power to bind Offenders, and Persons concerned, to appear, or prosecute in due order and season; punish for offences in that kind; and if need be, commit to prison for security.

If Rulers offend either morally or politically, by rigor, partiality or remisness, his or their next Superiours have power to correct such evils, according to the Word of God; and as need may be, the Case may orderly ascend, from Court to Court, even to the highest Council. Heresie, Blasphemy, and other gross (especially if capital) sins, are just cause, in due order, of deposition from his Office, by the Supreme Council; the Cause coming to them either by orderly ascent, or taken in immediately, as a notorious scandal, which calleth for speedy remedy.

CHAP. VII.

SO much for the single Platform of Christ his Government: now followeth the Superiour, arising out of the first.

When the Lord shall bow the hearts of great Nations, to embrace this form of Government, there being populous Cities, Provinces, and Countries, where the Rulers of thousands will be greatly multiplied, and Causes frequently fall out, betwixt parties of several thousands; yea, and betwixt the Rulers of thousands sometimes, being so numerous, insomuch that the Supreme Council will be overburdened, even as *Moses* was.

Hence there will be a necessity of erecting the Superiour platform of the Lords Government: which by proportion unto the single Platforme (which is more fully expresst in Scripture) doth arise from it, and is builded upon it.

Namely, that every ten orders of thousands, should chuse a Ruler of ten thousand, or a Myriade; and five orders of Myriades, a Ruler of fifty thousand, or five Myriades; and two orders of five Myriades should chuse a Ruler of an hundred thousand, or ten Myriades: and ten orders of an heundred thousands, or ten Myriades, should chuse a Ruler of a thousand thousand, or an hundred Myriades, or a Million.

I am led to believe, that this Superiour order of Rulers, is a Divine institution, not only by consequence of proportion to the single Platform; but expresly, and that it was practised by *Moses* in Israel: namely, that ten Rulers of thousands had a Ruler over them of ten thousands, or of a Myriade; and that the order of Myriades or ten thousands, were as duly & orderly observed, as the orders of thousands were. For *Numb.* 10.36. when they rested from their marching, *Moses* blessed them, and said, *Return O Lord, to the Myriades of the thousands of Israel:* therefore there were orders of Myriades, as well as of thousands.

Furthermore, it is expresly said, by *Moses* in his song, Deut.33.2. *The Lord came from Sinai* (namely, where the order of Government was first instituted) *and he came with myriades of Saints.* Therefore orders of Myriades were instituted and acted from the first foundation of this Government.

Likewise, *Deut.* 33. 17. he speaketh of the orders of Myriades among the Tribes, as familiarly observable, as the orders of thousands. So that we may see this Superiour order and platform of Government, observed in Israel, and expressed in the holy Scriptures.

The Ruler of a Myriade hath this eminency, above a Ruler of ten in the single Platform, that all his ten whom he immediately ruleth, are eminent Rulers.

Hence they are an Assembly of Judges, and a Court, for number every way proportionable to the Court of eleven: but for eminency and distinction

&tion they are more properly called the Court of one Myriade.

The Ruler of fifty thousand or five Myriades holdeth a Court for number proportionable to the Court of six in the single Platform: but for eminency and distinction, they are more properly called the Court of five Myriades.

The Ruler of an hundred thousand, or ten Myriades, holdeth a Court for number proportionable to the Court of three in the single Platform: but for eminency and distinction, it is more properly called the Court of ten Myriades.

The Ruler of a thousand thousand, or an hundred Myriades, holdeth a Court for number proportionable to the Court of eleven; but for eminency and distinction, it is more properly called the Court of one hundred Myriades.

The times or seasons, Officers or other means for the most effectual ordering of these Courts, will be most fitly discerned, and agreed, by such a people as may have use of them.

The Causes which most properly belong to the Court of one Myriade, are such as fall out betwixt parties of their several thousands; as also difficult Cases transmitted from the Court of eleven, and Appeals from them.

Also all such Cases as concern the Publick good of all under them.

All Courts of the Superiour order have power to judge all capital Cases whatsoever.

The Court of one Myriade hath also power to judge any Cause betwixt the Rulers of the thou-

sand

sands of that Myriade, who are not to judge in the Court when their own Case is judged. Difficult Cases they transmit, and Appeals they bind over to the Court of five Myriades, if there be such a Court betwixt them and the Supreme Council: otherwise they transmit them to the Council.

The Causes which properly belong to the Court of five Myriades, are such as fall out betwixt parties of the several Myriades under them.

I will ascend no higher, in describing the Courts of the Superiour order: party because Gods Method is plain, and also it will be rarely of use in any Commonwealth; especially considering that which I farther propound.

Namely, seeing God himself was pleased to appoint a Prince, a chief Ruler, over every Tribe in Israel, who were distinguished, by that civil distinction of kindreds:

By proportion thereunto, in populous Nations, where there be other civil distinctions of societies and cohabitations of men, *viz.* by Cities, Provinces, Countries, *&c.* should not they chuse a Prince, a chief Ruler of those several Precincts of civil society?

Whose Office is chiefly to take care of the good Government, firstly, of all the Superiour Rulers under him; as also of all the rest, as he hath opportunity, that the Lord may rule among them.

Likewise to hold a Court, consisting either of the Rulers of Myriades, or of five Myriades, or of ten Myriades, or of an hundred Myriades, accor-

according to the greatness of the people in his Precincts.

This Court to be called the Court of the Prince, or Lord, or chief Ruler of such a Precinct; and to be next unto the Supreme Council: from which Court, onely difficult Cases and Appeals have access to the Supreme Council, and to which they remit the determinations of the Cause, to receive its judgement: Lest the Supreme Council be oppressed with business from so many Courts, and thereby the people with delays of hearing and issue, occasioned thereby.

It seemeth to be right Orders, and according to Gods institution, that these Princes of the several Tribes or Societies of men should be members of the Supreme Council: The whole Dominion being distributed unto the Supreme Counsellours, or to so many of them as may be meet. For the Princes of the Tribes of Israel (it seemeth to me) were members of the Sanhedrim or Supreme Council; because God commanded that they should be chosen very carefully from among the Elders of the people. Hence they will chuse the most choice of their Elders to send up with *Moses* to stand before God. Now they could not chuse better, fitter, and men more acceptable to God, out of all their Elders, then those whom God himself had chosen by name, to be Princes of the Tribes.

Besides, it is exceedingly harmonious, in the frame of this Government, that it should be so: for though whoever of the other Elders, whether of the

the single or Superiour Order, be chosen to the Supreme Council, it may seem requisite, they should leave the lower station, lest when Appeals have passed in the circuit of Gods Government, and come to the highest Council, there should be sundry of them, through whose judgement the Cause had formerly passed, which may prove prejudicial both to their persons, and to the Cause.

But when it hath lastly passed through the Court of the Prince of the Tribe, meet it is that one of the last Court through which it passed, should be present in the Supreme Council, to give true information, how they lastly after all former Tryals did find the Cause.

But this is to be observed in the distribution of the whole Dominion to the several Supreme Counsellours, that no such civil Dominion is to be put upon or accepted by such Elders of Churches, as are Members of the high Council; as being such whose only Office and Work is to search the holy Scriptures, and give all attendance to declare the Divine Oracle of God in such Cases as are in hand, of what nature soever they be: yea, and if the Council see need, to call Ecclesiastical Councils, greater or lesser, to search out the mind of Christ; for his presence and blessing is in every Ordinance; and all joyntly conspire the advancement of his Kingdom, and the doing of his will.

The Election of all Superiour Rulers, is to be after the same manner as in the single form, *viz.* by all the people *, over whom they are to rule.

Some of the Princes of the Tribes of Israel, may seem

* *Or orders of men.*

seem to be Rulers of fifty thousands, or of five Orders of Myriades: yet the Office of the Princes was not onely under that notion, but also as an head of a civil society, a kindred, an eminent part, a division of the Commonwealth: for some of the Tribes had but four Myriades, and some but three, and therefore could not in that way and order have a Ruler of five Myriades. Therefore they must needs be instituted under another consideration, *viz.* as being the head or chief Ruler over an eminent part, or division of the Commonwealth, being civilly divided into such Societies.

CHAP.

CHAP. VIII.

SO much for the Platform of the Lords Government. Now it remains to consider of the Laws by which these Rulers are to Govern the Lords people. The written Word of God is the perfect Systeme or Frame of Laws, to guide all the Moral actions of man, either towards God or man: the Application whereof to every Case according to its circumstances, must be by the wisdom and discretion of the Judges, guided by the light of the Scriptures, and a pure Conscience.

The judgement and determination of a Cause, is nothing else, but the particular application of the Cause, according to all its circumstances, unto the Rule and Standard of Gods Word.

The Records of which judgements, are equivalent to Humane Laws. Which so far as the Case with all its circumstances considered is rightly applyed to the Rule of the Word, is a deduct from Scripture, and bindeth the Consciences, both of Judges alway so to judge in the like case, and the people so to walk.

Which Records to order wisely, and publish for common instruction and edification, is a work of great wisdom, and tendeth much to Gods glory, the good of the people, and the facilitating and expediting justice, among them. All Strangers, are to be accounted under the Government of those Orders where they reside, and where their business lieth; so as to have the benefit of the Government of the Lord, as our own people have.

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